500 \$MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

and more, he gradually yielded to resolving, obsession, however, to cast the military men on one side, after they had only been agents, in some degree the victims of their training. In lieu of them he would depict those whom he regarded as the real culprits. It had settled that the book should deal with school life; and would easy to adapt a kind of Dreyfus case to such surroundings.

A Jewish schoolmaster might be substituted officer, while as for the crime which it would necessary to impute to him, there had been a terrible affair Lille, not long previously, the murder of a little boy, which certain Brother Flamidien who was spirited awav his colleagues - had been implicated. Some such brother would represent Esterhazy in Zola's work, Dreyfus being represented by Simon, the Jewish schoolmaster.

That Zola repeatedly hesitated with respect to this pastiche of the Dreyfus case is certain. In the summer of he wrote to Vizetelly that he was preparing " V&rit^i." that none of it would be ready for several for months, was still doubtful whether he would introduce certain ments into the work or not. Finally, as the only means.

perhaps, of relieving his mind, he took the plunge, resolving upon an adaptation of the Affair on the lines one has indicated. Yet he again paused more than once, as he men-

tioned in another letter. That was written on September

12, when he further stated that he would have nothing ready until the ensuing month of January, 1902, when he wrote to Vizetelly:

Ι

"Thanks for your good wishes for the New Year, and pray accept ours for yourself and all your family. I find I shall not have * Yerite' ready for publication as a book until next October,